

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

SOURCE: 25X1X

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1. After World War II there were several price reductions on consumer goods in the USSR; however, I am acquainted only with the price reductions in Kherson (N 46-40, E 32-35).
2. Except for the prices of State-monopolized products (hard liquor, matches, and tobacco), which were standardized and uniform throughout the country, there was a certain, sometimes considerable, variation in prices from one market to the next in the USSR. Instrumental in this fluctuation were availability of goods in each area, supply and demand relationships, and transportation costs. Government price reductions were always given in percentages, thus reducing existing prices throughout the USSR, but not bringing them to a uniform level everywhere in the country.
3. Price reductions in the USSR normally were prepared and published in a very detailed manner, precisely specifying not only the groups of goods to which a certain reduction applied, but also giving the categories and subcategories within the groups. Thus, in the group prices for cereals, there would appear a category entitled "Flour", which would be broken down into large numbers of subcategories, each giving the specific characteristics of a particular subcategory of flour and the amount which it was to be reduced in percentage. The same procedure was followed for all groups of consumer goods, construction materials, etc.

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(Note: Washington Distribution Indicated By "X"; Field Distribution By "#".)

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4. Although I cannot give information on the prices of individual consumer goods, I can give the following approximate volume (in percentage) of consumer goods sold in the various stores: 25X1A

Type of Store	Food	Clothing- Footwear	Hardware	Misc.
State Stores	17	70	30	
Cooperatives	30	30	60	50
Military Stores	3			
Free Market	50		10	50

Military stores were restricted to military personnel and their dependents. It was possible for the civilian population occasionally to obtain goods from military stores through friends. Normally, military personnel could make all their purchases (except, probably, vegetables) in military stores. Prices in such stores were not lower than in State stores and cooperatives, but the assortment was considerably better.

5. Throughout the year there was always an abundant supply of fresh and frozen fish in Kherson; periodically there was also a sufficient supply of smoked fish. Except for very large cities such as Moscow and Leningrad, the meat supply in the USSR was inadequate. Fresh meat was sometimes available in Kherson, although I never saw any frozen, dried, and smoked meat there, nor was there canned meat available. Fresh vegetables were available in season but never dried. Throughout the year one could obtain a sufficient supply of canned vegetables, fruit, etc. Canned vegetables were normally three times more expensive than fresh ones. Canned vegetable stews were sometimes available in stores.
6. In general, public dining and drinking places in the USSR could be broken down into the three following categories:
- Dining rooms of large hotels or city restaurants, with clean table linens, uniformed waitresses or waiters, and, normally, a band of several musicians entertaining guests at lunch and dinner time.
 - Railroad station restaurants, public restaurants in towns, open-air establishments, various messes, etc.
 - Various types of beer houses, public bars, snack bars, wine houses, etc.

Approximate prices of meals and refreshments outside the home in Kherson were:

Type of Meal and Refreshment	Factory Mess	Public Dining and Drinking Places Prices in Rubles		
		3rd Category	2nd Category	1st Category
Breakfast: 2 eggs, bread, butter, tea		4	5	5-7
Dinner: Bowl of soup, second course: meat or fish with potatoes or something similar, and dessert	without dessert 1.5	6	10	15
Supper: Meat or fish course with vegetables or spaghetti		5	8	12
150 grams of vodka		8.5	9	10
Bottle of beer (333 grams)		4	4.5	5
Bottle of cheap wine (750 grams)		12	15	16-17

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7. I never saw any refrigerators or TV sets in the USSR. The supply of radio receivers, especially of better makes, was very poor. A good radio receiver (Riga) cost approximately 1,800 rubles; cheaper ones (Moskvich make) cost 200 to 400 rubles.
8. I have given information on the average budget of three different income groups in the USSR. See page 6. In this chart a family consists of husband, wife, and two children up to 17 years of age; both parents work. None of these families was assigned a government apartment and all of them paid normal rents.
9. The storage, warehousing, and refrigeration facilities for consumer goods were available solely to the plants, government stores, etc. No refrigeration facilities were available to citizens, except for those who could afford an apartment-type refrigerator, which cost several thousand rubles and was probably available in Moscow stores.
10. The hotel and lodging situation in the USSR was, in general, poor. Such places were always overcrowded and the facilities normally were available only to government employees on TDY. People traveling on their own were in no position to obtain hotel accommodations, unless they would bribe the porter (which was quite customary). Very often lodging could be obtained with less trouble in private apartments in towns or on the adjoining kolkhozy. In better hotels in Kherson, a bed in a four-bed room cost 8 rubles, a double bedroom (family room), 20 rubles.
11. Medical services and sanatorium facilities in the USSR were normally free of charge. Rest homes charged from 10 to 15 rubles daily. Normally, part of these expenses were borne by the enterprise granting such leave to the employee, and the other part by the employee.
12. Laundry and dry-cleaning facilities were quite an expensive service in provincial towns. Dry cleaning of a man's suit cost approximately 25 rubles. Beauty shops were unknown in the USSR, except, probably, in Moscow. Provincial towns usually had ladies' hair-dressing shops which were frequented by the few women who could afford it. Barber shops were available in sufficient number; a plain haircut cost 2 rubles, a shave 1.20 rubles. Provincial towns normally had one or two photo stores, where cameras and photographic equipment could be bought and the films developed and printed.
13. Realty and movable property could be insured with the State Social Insurance Company (Gos.sotsstrakh), but I do not know any details of how this was done. I do not know whether life insurance policies were available in the USSR.
14. Only a small number of art, language, and similar educational facilities were privately operated in the USSR; all other educational institutions were State-operated. I do not know the school tuitions. Public libraries were free, but a deposit had to be made on all books taken home for reading.
15. Garbage and sewage disposal and similar utilities were available in large cities. In provincial towns these services were normally available only in the central part of towns.
16. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Society was a voluntary welfare organization, especially active in war-time; in peace-time its activity was limited to the medical care given to children (shots, especially tuberculine, medicines, etc.) cultural lectures, exhibitions, etc. The annual membership fee of this society was 2.40 rubles. Kindergartens and nurseries were normally organized in all industrial enterprises; services were free.

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17. Motion pictures were available, even in small towns. Traveling movie houses visited kolkhozy. Generally tickets cost 2½ to 3 rubles. Stage shows, however, were available only in larger towns; tickets cost from 4 to 15 rubles. Several dancing places were available in almost every town; tickets were 1 to 1½ rubles. 25X1A

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Prices of Consumer Goods in Kherson Area in 1948-1952

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	Goods	1948		1950		1952	
		In Stores	On the Market	In Stores	On the Market	In Stores	On the Market
1	Man's Working Shoes	180-200		150-180		130-150	
2	Man's Shoes, Better Quality	350-400		280-350		250-320	
3	Man's Working Suit	200-220		180-200		120-160	
4	Man's Holiday Suit	700-950		650-900		600-800	60% wool
5	Woman's Working Dress	120-160		100-120		70-100	
6	Woman's Holiday Dress	350-500		320-450		300-400	
7	Cloth for Man's Suit, 1 m.	380-400		300-380		280-350	
8	Worsted, 1 m.	450-500		420-480		400-450	
9	Artificial Silk	35-40		25-35		20-30	Seldom Available
10	Linen, per meter	15-18		12-15		10-12	
11	White Bread 1 kg.	2.80-3.20		2.60-3.00		2.20-2.60	
12	Black Bread 1 kg.	2.00-2.20		2.00-2.10		1.80-2.00	
13	Potatoes 1 kg.	1.20	1.00	0.90	0.80	0.80	0.60
14	Butter 1 kg.	30-40		28-32		25-30	
15	Milk, 1 lit.	5		4		3.5	
16	Eggs, doz.	8-10		6-8		5-6	In the midst of the season
17	Beef 1 kg.	20-22		18-20		16-18	
18	Pork 1 kg.	25-28		22-25		20-22	
19	Bacon 1 kg.	28-30		25-28		20-25	
20	Sausage 1 kg.	20-60		20-45		15-40	
21	Fowl 1 kg.	35-40		30-35		30-35	
22	Fish 1 kg.	10-18		8-15		5-12	
23	Herring	12		8-10		7	
24	Canned Fish	8-10		6-8		5-6	
25	Canned Vegetables	5-5.00		3.50-5		3-7	
26	Honey	25		22		20	
27	Cotton Dress Material, per meter	12-15		10-12		8-10	
28	Velvet, per meter	18-30		15-25		12-20	

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Average Family Budgets (Husband, Wife, and Two Children) in the USSR

	Expenses	Total Annual Family Income 8,400 Rubles (Industrial Workers)	Total Annual Family Income 12,000 Rubles (Technicians)	Total Annual Family Income 25,200 Rubles (Engineers, Doctors)
1	Food	3,600	4,800	7,800
2	Clothing and Footwear	1,800	2,400	5,400
3	Apartment	360	480	1,200
4	Furniture		240	600
5	Electricity and Heating	540	600	600
6	Community Utility Services	60	72	120
7	Personal Care and Services	480	720	2,400
8	Entertainment	180	360	720
9	Transportation Costs	360	600	1,680
10	Taxes	300	480	960
11	State Loan	600	960	1,920
12	Party, Trade Union Fees, and Similar	24	28	48
13	Miscellaneous	96	260	1,752
	Total	8,400	12,000	25,200

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